

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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45

ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 SY-10 FBIE-00

RSR-01 /095 W

----- 026641

R 101555 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8081

INFO CINCSO FOR POLAD

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

DIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 2026

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, DR

SUBJECT: KIDNAPPING ATTEMPT ON DOMINICAN SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
FRUSTRATED

1. LIC. RICARDO ENRIQUE ESPINAL MEDINA, A YOUNG EX- JOURNALISM STUDENT AT THE SANTO DOMINGO AUTOMOMOUS UNIVERSITY AND FORMER EMPLOYEE AT THE SECRETARIAT OF EDUCATION. ATTEMPTED TO KIDNAP AT GUNPOINT EARLY MAY 9 DRA. ALTAGRACIA BAUTISTA DE SUAREZ, SECRETARY OF EDUCATION.

2. ACCORDING TO ACCOUNT DRA. BAUTISTA DE SUAREZ, LATERGAVE TO THE PRESS, ESPINAL ENTERED HER OFFICE AT APPROXIMATELY 9:00 A. M. AND PRESENTED HER WITH A DOCUMENT INDICATING THAT HE INTENDED TO KIDNAP HER OR THE FONSEC DR. VICTOR GOMEZ BERGES TO HOLD AS HOSTAGE TO FORCE THE GODR TO RELEASE CAPTURED GUERRILLA HAMLET HERMANN PEREZ. (ONE PRESS ACCOUNT INDICATES THAT ESPINAL AND HERMANN ARE FRIENDS.) DURING A SCUFFLE WHICH ENSUED FOLLOWING DRA. SUAREZ' REFUSAL TO ACCOMPANY HER WOULD- BE ABDUCTOR, ESPINAL STRUCK DRA. SUAREZ' SECRETARY ON THE HEAD WITH HIS .38 CALIBER PISTOL AND FIRED SEVERAL SHOTS INTO THE AIR BEFORE FINALLY BEING SUBDUED BY THE POLICE. HE WAS IMMEDIATELY TAKEN TO THE POLICE PALACE FOR INTERROGATION.
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3. ESPINAL HAD EARLIER THAT MORNING REPORTEDLY GONE TO THE SECRETARIAT OF FOREIGN RELATIONS WHERE HE HAD APPARENTLY INTENDED TO KIDNAP DR. GOMEZ BERGES. AFTER WAITING TWENTY MINUTES IN THE FONSEC' S OUTER OFFICE, HE WAS INFORMED THAT DR. GOMEZ BERGES WOULD NOT APPEAR AT HIS OFFICE THAT DAY BECAUSE OF PRIOR COMMITMENTS. AT THIS TIME, ESPINAL WENT TO THE SECRETARIAT OF EDUCATION.

4. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, ESPINAL HAS A LONG RECORD OF POLITICAL ACTIVISM DATING BACK TO 1961. HE REPORTEDLY BELONGS TO THE MOVEMENT OF NATIONAL CONCILIATION (MCN) AND SUPPORTED HECTOR GARCIA GODOY' S CANDIDACY IN THE 1970 ELECTION. HE ALSO WAS PRESIDENT OF THE MCN' S YOUTH MOVEMENT. WHEN MCN PRESIDENT DR. JAIME MANUEL FERNANDEZ BECAME EDUCATION SECRETARY, ESPINAL WAS GIVEN THE JOB OF EDITING THE SECRETARIAT' S MAGAZINE 5" EDUCACION." HE LEFT THAT JOB WHEN FERNANDEZ WAS FIRED IN NOVEMBER 1972. ACCORDING TO THE MAY 9 ISSUE OF ULTIMA HORA, ESPINAL DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS A MEMBER OF A " COMMUNIST COMMANDO."

5. COMMENT: IT IS NOT YET KNOWN IF ESPINAL WAS ACTING ALONE OR WAS POSSIBLY CONNECTED WITH SOME EXTREMIST ORGANIZATION. THE EMBASSY IS UNAWARE OF FURTHER ARRESTS IN CONNECTION WITH THE ATTEMPTED KIDNAPPING OTHER THAN THAT OF ESPINAL' S ROOMMATE FRANKLIN DOMINGUEZ, NOTED DOMINICAN PLAYWRIGHT (WHO WAS RELEASED AFTER QUESTIONING). NEVERTHELESS, THE BIZAREE NATURE OF THE INCIDENT HAS GIVEN RISE IN SOME QUARTERS THAT PERHAPS THERE IS MORE BEHIND THE KIDNAPPING ATTEMPT THAN MEETS THE EYE. ARMA HAS RECEIVING A BRIEF REPORT FROM A MILITARY INTELLIGENCE OFFICER WHO CONDUCTED AN INTERROGATION OF ESPINAL INDICATING THAT ESPINAL CLAIMED HE ACTED INDEPENDENTLY OUT OF SYMPATHY FOR HERMANN, HIS FORMER TEACHER AT THE UASD. SECURITY OFFICIALS AT THIS POINT ARE NOT CONVINCED OF THE VERACITY OF ESPINAL' S STORY.
MELOY

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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